PRE-SYNOPSIS OF THE PROPOSED DOCTORAL RESEARCH WORK

ON

Identity Pursuits in Nikita Singh's Select Novels:A Study

PRE-SYNOPSIS

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Introduction

Nikita Singh is the bestselling author of thirteen books, including The Reason Is You, Every Time It Rains and The Promise. Born and raised in India, Nikita got her MFA in creative Writing at The New School in New York. She has worked with two major publishers, and published seven books with Penguin Random House and with Harper Collins Publishers. Nikita's most recent book, a collection of stories called What Do You See When You Look In The Mirror? Released in August 2021. At present, she lives in Montreal and works for a solar energy company based in Brooklyn, New York.

In 2013, Nikita received the Live India Young Achievers Award. Nikita delivered talks at numerous TEDX events lectures at the best universities across India, including IIMs, IITs. Nikita's interviews, book tours and reviews have been featured extensively in the national and local media by publications like The Times of India, Huffington Post, Hindustan Times, The Telegraph, Outlook, Forbes, The Hindu, Scroll, Cosmopolitan, Harper's Bazar, Grazia and New Indian Express.

List of the Novels:

1.***Accidently in Love (2011)***

2.Like a Love Song (2016)

3.Every Time it Rains (2017)

4.Letters to My Ex (2018)

5.The Reason is You (2019)

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1) The aim of the research is to trace the identity pursuits in the select novels of Nikita Singh.
2) To understand the role of gender and class in shaping identities.
3) To discover the obstacles in females progress.
4) To explore the impact of urbanization and globalization on individuality.
5) To study and analyze the social process to know the things, traditions, values and beliefs through which characters show self-identity in a modern society.

Scope and Limitations:

The proposed research is an attempt to study thoroughly the selected works of Nikita Singh. All her novels encompass the quest for Identity, friendship, trust, failure, depression and love issues. The study will confine itself to the select novels only. It will not consider non-fictional works of Nikita Singh. The scope of the research will be to study the Identity Pursuit of characters.

Review of Literature:

The protagonists in novels of Bharati Mukherjee are seen to be very different variations of female immigrants who have tried to frame their identities from a cross-cultural perspective, by interacting with different people from different countries and different cultures.Kamala Markandaya's protagonist are found to be an intense quest for their identity .Whether they are Ravi and Nalini in A Handful of Rice or Mira and Richard in Some Inner Fury ,Sarojini and Dandekar in ***A Silence of Desire***,Val and Bell in Possession they all appear to be demanding self-identity.Shashi Deshpande occupies a significant place in contemporary women novelists who have expressed their concern for problems of women and their quest for identity.

Anita Desai occupies an important place among Indian English women writers. She explores the inner consciousness or the psychological state of women's mind. She is recognized for her originality, versatility and the indigenous flavour of her character-portrayal that she brings to her work, such as Bim, Amla and Deven. Bim's rage is almost neurotic, but her vision soon acquires an authenticity. She finds her lost self and achieves self-realization. Amla has an affirming faith in life.

In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's ***Sister of My Heart (1999), The Vine of Desire (2002), Queen of Dreams (2004), The Palace of Illusions (2008), One Amazing Thing (2010) and Oleander Girl (2013).***The question of women identity, immigrant experiences, multicultural society and complexities, melting boundaries, issue of female self-expression, inter-generational conflicts and the significance of the folk legends and epics in the contemporary modern world in the wider contexts of diaspora experiences. Shobha De occupies a prominent place in the Indian Women writers. De is the most courageous and famous novelist who tried her best to afford her woman character a high social standard .This quest is a bashful effort to evaluate her women character's self-identity.

The characters of Jaishree Misra are courageous enough to defend against the suppression imposed upon their life by tradition and custom. They defend the exploitation of women in the name of the so-called custom and tradition. Women's efforts to come out of the chains that bind them are focused. Ancient Promises as subverting the Sita myth, Sita is considered the embodiment of all women's virtues like modesty, chastity, endurance, obedience, and self-sacrifice. Jaishree Misra's afterwards focuses on the man-woman relationship in contemporary Indian society. The novel goes deep into the inner psyche of Maya, and her quest for happiness, and urges her to free herself from a suspicious, egoistic, and self-centred husband. Maya's efforts to assert her individuality as a human being and her struggle to escape from the unhappy life of an independent individual become the way to maintain her identity.

Nikita Singh has emerged as a budding romance writer in the last 10 years. She is a distinguished writer who deals with various themes. On the horizon of Indian English literature, Nikita looks towards life with a modern perspective. Nikita was being rejected by many scholars at her initial stage of writing. But later on, the continuous efforts and back-to-back unstoppable work on the novels proved herself as an important writer who can be considered as a prominent literary personality.

Nikita’s novels have the capacity to move the readers. Although she is very talented, she is less unexplored from a research point of view. She is a budding rather blooming writer whose works have many petals to be opened yet; and she has proved this in her writings where one finds her improving in one after the other novel. As Nikita Singh is a modern writer; and there is much scope to work on her novel.

The proposed research work aims to study the identity of the characters, self-discovery, societal expectation, friendship, dilemma, struggle; these areas are not touched by any research work, so far, by any scholar. These themes are diversified and untouched. Above mentioned themes can be easily found in Nikita’s most of the novels. As this aspect of investigation is not touched upon by any researcher it can be discussed thoroughly in the proposed study.

Statement of Research Problem:

Identity Pursuits in Nikita Singh's Select Novels:A Study

Research Gap:

Although Nikita Singh has been extensively worked upon, the works of such a literary giant leaves scope and gaps for every new researcher. Her novels, unlike the novels of Chetan Bhagat in India, are written on humanitarian background. Quest for Identity in metropolitan cities of India is a burning issue of this generation. The social and psychological interpretation of the characters would enlighten readers and researchers to understand the wrong, illegal and unjust; and bring change in themselves and the society. Therefore, there is a great need for the evaluation and analysis of the identity in metropolitan cities to benefit the society, and to abstain itself from committing any wrong deeds. The research work on humanity and human problems would always be welcomed in the society, for it adds something to the knowledge of society and paves the way for the youth.

Research Problems:

1) What are the factors that are responsible for the quest of identity?
2) Are some solutions provided for the issues of quest for identity in the select novels of Nikita Singh?
3) Is the social and psychological interpretation of the characters help readers to understand the problem in a better way?

Hypotheses:

Following are the hypotheses for the present research study, it is hypothesized that the quest for identity in modern society is against Indian culture.

1) Self-identity in modern India as depicted in Nikita Singh's writings.
2) Nikita's modern characters accept modernity to suit modern lifestyle.
3) In the modern world, the ideas of love, friendship and trust are changing which create some problems.
4) To unravel the conflicts in women's emancipation.

Data Collection:

1) Data will be collected from primary and secondary sources.
2) Secondary data will be based on research articles and research journals.
3) Secondary data will be collected from different online libraries like Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University.
4) Web sources will be another source of secondary data.
5) Data also will be collected from the guidance of the research supervisor.

Research Methodology:

For the present research analytical and descriptive research methodology will be used to analyze, describe the personalities of the characters and to interpret the selected novels. Study will be made to understand the evaluation of identity pursuits of the characters and the society in which they live. Further, it would be descriptive while delineating and formulating its textual entity in the form of thesis. Through reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources will be made for the investigation of the selected context.

Finally, the study will establish, verify and validate its hypothetical assumptions by formulating a concrete conclusion to the theme undertaken. The researcher would use library methodology as per the availability of information on the topic.

Significance of the Research:

The present research would be an example for the in-depth study of her characters from the select novels from the viewpoint of quest for identity. Therefore, it will help the researchers and students to understand Nikita Singh from a different point of view. Academically, the research would engage and bring greater benefits to the concerned in the field.

Chapter Scheme:

Tentative Chapter scheme is as follows:

Chapter-I: Introduction

Chapter-II: Identity Crises and Self Discovery in ***Accidentlly in Love (2011)***

Chapter- III: Exploring the Search for Identity in ***Like a Love Song (2016)***

Chapter-IV: A Journey Towards Self Discovery in ***Every Time it Rains (2017)***

Chapter-V: Identity Exploration in ***Letters to My Ex (2018)***

Chapter-VI: Tracing the Quest for Identity in ***The Reason is You (2019)***

Chapter-VII: Conclusion

Chapter-I Introduction

The chapter first 'Introduction' will focus on the problems of self-identity and self-discovery. The definition of 'self-Identity' is, "A character's identity is how they perceive themselves and their place in the world around them. The identity can be of two types i.e. Internal Identity –The Self. This encompasses their perception of themselves and their place in their world and is typically a product of their past experiences, beliefs and life lessons. External Identity-The World how your protagonist perceives themselves, they'll also be affected by how others perceive them. This external identity informs how they're treated, what opportunities they're offered, and what conflicts they'll have to face.

The proposed research work will deal with the life of the people in the novels. Nikita Singh decides the individual's position in the society. It will also try to focus on the metropolitan life in India. As this proposed research will have the special focus on 'Friendship, love and trust'. There is a huge difference in the understanding of love by different generations which creates a lot of misunderstanding regarding love. The most important thing in life is love. It is the real happiness of life. But most of the people never understand what love is, throughout their whole life.

The present project and the chapter will relate to the friendship, love & trust in modern context in the novels of Nikita Singh. It also tries to focus on what are the responsible factors by which the concept of friendship, love and trust has been drastically changed. Now a days where life and the meaning of other aspects of the life are totally changed. Time has changed everything. The meaning of friendship & love according to the present time is totally different from that. To understand the modern meaning of love one has to understand the impact of modern life on friendship and love. This proposed chapter will try to relate the concept of friendship, love & trust in modern times with the select novels of Nikita Singh.

Chapter-II

Identity Crisis and Self Discovery in *Accidentlly in Love (2011)*

In this chapter an attempt would be made to find Identity crises and self-discovery of the characters. '***Accidentlly in Love'*** is all about the problems of self-identity. Chhavi is the female character who is a reputed model. It is difficult to sustain the top rank in tough competition. Tushar, a well-known photographer comes into her life and makes things all the more difficult for her. In ***'Accidentlly in Love'*** the strongest aspect is depth and authenticity of the characters .Chhavi is a young woman who finds herself at a crossroad in her life after a series of disappointment and heartbreaks ,suffering and failure in love.

Chhavi is a protagonist who feels like a friend, flawed yet endearing, and her emotional journey is portrayed with honesty and vulnerability. Singh skilfully explores the complexities of relationships, the intricacies of human emotions, and the importance of self-discovery and personal growth.The romance aspect of the story is beautifully crafted, filled with tender moments, witty banter, and an undeniable chemistry between the characters. Singh creates an engaging and believable love story, sprinkling it with realistic challenges and conflicts that keep readers invested and rooting for the characters.

Chapter-III

Exploring the Search for Identity in *Like a Love Song (2016*)

This chapter is all about the self-identity and existence in society. Exploring the search for identity in the select novel. '***Like a Love Song'*** novel is a good one. Maahi is the main character in the story. She is heartbroken and has no hopes of falling in love again. However, time is the best healer for the wounds and makes herself busy in her business and new identity. The protagonist Maahi is not flawless. She struggles, commits mistakes, faces her fears and discovers herself through her troubles. A few women can easily relate to her. Especially the dilemma of not knowing what you really want has been portrayed with the right depth. But I wonder whether any girl would discontinue her studies just for the sake of a breakup, given the story is set in a contemporary era. Are women that vulnerable that they can leave everything just because a man broke their heart? Maybe Nikita could have justified it by telling that Maahi loathed engineering and she had to discontinue it. That act of Maahi was unsatisfactory.

'Like A Love Song' is an ordinary tale of a very young girl Maahi. She is just twelfth passed and hoping from one branch to another in quest of love. Will she get comeuppance for her hastiness or something else? When she moves to South India, against the will of her parents, just for the sake of love of a selfish guy, this book becomes a 'too-early-to-fall-in-love' kind of novel. As expected the guy breaks her heart and she comes back to her home, to her parents, in North India, in Delhi. Now what? She must start a new life somehow. Instead of choosing a degree in a university, she rather begins her job search, first in an IT firm and then in a bakery-kind of bistro only to make a career in the bakery business. And from there on the banal story goes on. Now she indulges herself in learning bakery products, finding a friend with whom she can share and cry on her shoulders. Another guy knocking at her heart, and then the comeback of the old guy. She is in a mess – but that's too much for a young lasso in her early twenties. According to the story and cope-ups, she would have been a matured lady of early thirties.

Chapter-IV

A Journey Towards Self Discovery in *Every Time It Rains (2017)*

Fourth chapter deals with the characters journey towards self-discovery, self-identity and existence in society. In ***'Every Time it Rains'*** female protagonist Laila is yet to recover from her painful past. Hurt, and untrusting of love, she is fully immersed in work, her only source of cheer and new identity. Her bakery franchise is very popular .Just when things are looking up, along comes JD, an impetuous, free-spirited creature to stir up the calm. He's her exact opposite. Laila's self-destructive, he's life-affirming. She's cautious, he's buoyant. But here's the thing: he makes her feel the very things she wanted to forget. Stirring a familiar passion she longed for but had lost the courage to pursue. ***'Every Time It Rains'*** is about a girl named Laila who 'once was in love,' was wounded and heartbroken but still became happier due to it. Laila felt she had it all: a famous bakery business that could go global if she pulled off the huge deal and the love of her parents. Before a tragic encounter. She concluded she didn't want anything to do with JD, a rambunctious, free-spirited man who was upsetting her peaceful life. Despite this, they are irresistibly drawn to each other. But can Laila put her confidence in him? The more she learns about him, the more she needs to, but nightmares from her past continue to plague her present, preventing her from doing so. And here's the truth about ***'Every Time It Rains***' he helps her experience something she didn't even realize she needed.

'Every Time It Rains' is about Laila's point of view, and also explores the inner soil and traits of this lonely intriguing character. The first half of the book is about business deals and bakery business and cupcakes and cookies. But who knows the lass trying for a national level franchise is heart-broken from within. Trying to still come up with the terms of life, thus she is extra focused on her work, probably a way to get away with old deeds and pains. Indeed, broken hearts can strive for anything – it itself is a motivational force within oneself, but you need to utilize that before believing in that.

Chapter-V

Identity Exploration in *Letters to My Ex (2018)*

In this chapter the study of characters' self-identity, dilemma and disintegration will be explored.'***Letters to my Ex'*** is the best example of problems in love and self-identity. This novel starts with our female protagonist, Nidhi, better that she writes to herself stating why and how she has broken her engagement with her fiancé Abhay. The letters are simple descriptions about her perspectives and feelings for Abhay. Her letters say how they met and how everything fell into pieces and how everything laid to her and Abhay's long-term relationship and finally how Nidhi came to the conclusion that Abhay loved her no more and stood courageously. In ***'Letters to My Ex'*** the protagonist after ditching her boyfriend of over five years for reasons which aren't even known to herself, she isn't a very happy soul. To overcome the pangs of guilt and hopelessness Nidhi decides to write letters to her ex. In doing so she is only relying on the healing powers of this writing therapy; she doesn't intend to ever post these letters to Abhay.

The story is of two characters Nidhi and Abhay. Once they were in love – something serious kind of stuff – but as soon as they were out of college their love began to disintegrate because of their choices to excel at lives. With these letters, the writer tries to understand the reasons why people fall in love, the reasons why they stay together, the reasons they break up. She tried to explore what happens when two people who love each other deeply and break. And what it takes for them to find their way back to each other. They have hurt each other. They are broken! But silently crave for each other. Then gradually the process of letter writing commences between them. Through these letters they try to catch up for the time they have lost while remaining apart. They both want to reconcile once again by forgetting their bad times and fixing their lives.

Chapter-VI

Tracing the Quest for Identity in *The Reason is You (2019)*

The Sixth chapter would be about tracing characters' quest for identity,self ,depression and boundaries of traditional relationship.In the novel '***The Reason is You'*** Siddhant meets Akriti during their medical residency in Delhi. Their connection is instant, blossoming from the many similarities between them. So, when Akriti faces a devastating loss, she leans on Siddhant for support. In the heat of an emotional moment, the two decide that this must be love. But as Akriti's depression begins to take a stronger hold over her, she spirals out of control, sinking deeper into an abyss of fear, insecurity and rage. And while Siddhant struggles to help her, it seems like everything he does is only making things worse.Meanwhile, Siddhant's life gets further complicated when Maahi, his ex-girlfriend whom he never stopped loving, re-enters his life.Nikita Singh returns with a stirring story - exploring emotional health, the boundaries of traditional relationships and second chances.

It is the tale of the love of Siddhant and Akriti. They met during a medical residency and connected instantly .Later Akriti faces a horrible loss and falls into deep depression .Her heart wrenching struggle for life and failure in love ,suffering is portrayed in ***'The Reason is You'.'The Reason is You'*** depicts Akriti is not in her right mental state. She suffers from chronic depression, which involuntarily makes him react irrationally. It is later realized by Siddhant that her love for him is not even love in true form. The emphasis is laid on how a depressed person may behave and how dangerous they can be if not provided proper emotional care by a psychiatrist.***'The Reason is You'*** emphasizes on how neglecting depression or mental sickness can prove to be fatal, as a human we should accept it as just any other sickness. We should help the people, we love in getting care under a psychiatrist.

Chapter-V

Conclusion

The fifth chapter will be the conclusion. It will take an overview of Nikita Singh's probing of the universally pertinent issue of identity. The dilemma faced by an individual in the world of modernity will be presented with deep insight. It will deal with Nikita's primary interest in exploring the positive and healthy aspect of self-identity. Life without self-identity is meaningless affair, without friendship, love and trust life is not possible. The fifth and final chapter will conclude the research and scope for future research.

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